

**SUBMARINE TELEGRAPHS.**—A correspondent claims for Mr. Walter Hancock, of Stratford, Essex, the first suggestion of a line of telegraph from Dover to Calais, and also the insulation of the wires, first, by India-rubber and shell-lac, and at length, on its introduction, by gutta percha. As to the latter point, we have at least always understood that Dr. Faraday first pointed out the insulating property of gutta percha, after which it was a matter of mere unmeritorious chance who might first think of applying it as an insulator to the electro-telegraphic wires. In the process of covering the wires, however, as now practised, there is certainly some ingenuity displayed: the wire with its covering, at a provincial paper, observes, resembles a wax-taper with its wick—and a pretty long taper is the 30-mile stretch across the channel, burning, electrically, at both ends, and enlightening France and England at one and the same time. The idea of this submarine telegraph Mr. Hancock is said to have suggested to Messrs. Cook and Westlake in 1848.

**DAGUERREOTYPING IN AMERICA.**—It is believed that the present number of persons directly engaged as Daguerreotypists in the United States, is ten thousand; to which may be added at least five thousand who obtain their living from indirect connection with the art, by the manufacture of plates, cases, chemicals, and apparatus—or that the aggregate supported in the Union by this means, cannot be far short of fifteen thousand persons. According to the *New York Tribune*, Mr. Brady of that city, is about to establish a new and important improvement in the process of taking pictures on ivory, by the aid of the Daguerreotype art.

**VENTILATION OF THE COURTS OF LAW.**—We understand that the Courts of Exchequer and Common Pleas at Westminster are about to be ventilated by the steam-jet. The arrangements are settled, and preparations are making by the office of Woods and Forests, under the direction of Mr. G. Gurney. Fresh air is to be brought in at a high level above the courts, and the vitiated air withdrawn by a separate jet from each court. The arrangements are to be carried out under the superintendence of Mr. Wm. Clark, late of King's College.

**ANOTHER SHAKESPEARE PORTRAIT.**—A painting was exhibited as last week, which, if not a genuine portrait of our immortal Shakespeare, an assertion we would not venture to make, is, at all events, an interesting picture. It is well painted; has a fine expression of countenance, with a beard and moustache, as in the Chandos and the Jansen portraits, and rings in the ears. The canvass, unquestionably old, has not been lined. On the top of the picture appear in raised letters, rudely formed with the pallet-knife and a composition of soap suds, *Quintus (sic) Shakspeare*, painted over with the field of the picture. Below the name, on the left-hand side of the head, is *Act. 47*; and on the right-hand side, *A.D. 1611*. The picture belongs to Dr. Parkes, of Great Marlborough-street, in whose possession it has been for some years, unregarded until a few days ago.

**GREAT IMPROVEMENTS IN FARRINGTON-ATRENT.**—By an Act passed during the last session of Parliament for making fresh charges on "The London Approaches Fund," the commissioners for the Farringdon-street and Clerkenwell improvements are empowered to raise 88,000*l.* on that fund, and the Improvement Committee have been instructed to carry out the purposes of the Act without delay.

**GENERAL ATHENÆUM.**—The members of this thriving institution, finding their present accommodation in every way now too much straitened for them, have unanimously resolved "to obtain estimates of the cost of, and the plans for, a new Athenæum building, and that the plans for the erection of the building shall be thrown open, by advertisement, for public competition."

**VENERING A ROYAL KNOT.**—At 103, Newgate-street, it is said, is to be seen a mottogary vener knot with a profile of her Majesty in it, "so true that all acknowledge the resemblance."

\* At the Polytechnic Institution, Regent-street, Mr. Bunsell is delivering a very interesting lecture "on a lot of steam," which some of our young readers would find instructive as well as amusing.

**LUCIFER MATCHES.**—According to Mr. Mayhew, in the *Morning Chronicle*, in one steam sawing mill, visited by him, the average number of splints made for lucifer matches is 158,000 gross of boxes a year, each box containing fifty splints—altogether sixty millions of matches. For the manufacture of this quantity 400 cubic feet of timber are used in a week, averaging eight trees, or 400 large trees a year for lucifer matches only, in one mill. It is no longer a joke to say a man who deals in matches is a timber-merchant.

**THE PARKS.**—Public attention has been directed, by *The Times*, to the state of the parks, and the amount of money expended in name of them, though not on them,—an amount which the late Mr. Loudon, the horticulturist, declared to be sufficient to convert them into beautiful gardens, and keep them so, if expended every year with ordinary judgment and in a right direction. Even on the present imperfect scheme they are badly kept up, trees falling into premature decay, drainage wanted, &c.

**WIDE ESTIMATING.**—We send you with this the amounts of tenders received for the Bursledon parsonage-house, offices, and stable building. Messrs. Hiddes and Bedfordough architects. Quantities were not supplied. The difference is startling.—A. B.

Burton (London).....	£2791
Pink (Nickham).....	2175
Fry and Newton (Bitterne).....	2150
Newman (Botley).....	2115
Bedborough (Widmore).....	2007
Bell and Cozens (Southampton).....	1896

**PEEL MEMORIALS.**—It is proposed to unite the suffrages of the various Peel Memorial Committees, in an endeavour to realise the sum of 124,000*l.*, required to complete the fund necessary for erecting churches in the remaining eighty-six of the new districts formed under Peel's Act for subdividing populous parishes. These it is proposed to call the "Peel District Churches," and in each to erect a tablet to the memory of the late baronet. A central memorial committee has been appointed to procure contributions.

**RETROGRESSION OF PLASTERERS.**—There is a house in Faversham having ornamental plastering for the outside front in firm and good condition, bearing the date of 1699, thus showing that it has been done 151 years. At another, in the same place, erected only two or three years since, the first plastering entirely failed, upon which it was removed, and replastered: the second-plastering also failed, and it has now been partially done a third time. This house, however, faces the south-west, whilst the first-mentioned faces the north-east; but there is another house in the town having ornamental plastering for its front, and in excellent preservation, bearing the date of 1697, thus having stood 153 years, and faces the south-west.—*Morning Herald*.

**ASSOCIATE LABOUR CONFERENCE.**—At Manchester, a number of delegates have assembled to discuss mutual interests, "so as not to give offence to any party or class." Amongst them is one from the stonemasons, who, in a preliminary discussion, stated that they were organised throughout England and Wales. They paid about 2,000*l.* a year to tramps. They had also an accident fund. From this fund they allowed members who might be disabled for life 80*l.* to start them in business. If a member was killed, they gave his widow 8*l.* for funeral money, and 40*l.* towards establishing her in business. The subjects proposed to be discussed are—wages—co-operative association and mutual exchanges—land cultivation, &c.

**FALL OF THE BRICKLAYERS' ARMS STATION.**—Sir,—Had the poor man who was killed by the fall of the above station been run over by a coal-wagon or drunken cabman, would the coroner have told the jury they were not to look at or examine the cause, but only the effect? What an outcry we should have had from some of the great men at the London-bridge station! It must be satisfactory to the public travelling by the line to see you have taken the matter under your practical surveillance, and, as one of them, I write to thank you. Will you be good enough to look in at the London-bridge station, and the public will thank you again, as you may save a few lives at that net-work some day! I give my name.—AN ADMIRER.

**WESTBOURNE SCHOOLS.**—On Saturday week the first stone of the Westbourne Schools, Westbourne-park, Paddington, was laid by the Hon. Arthur Kinnaird. Mr. F. W. Potter, of Charlotte-street, Bloomsbury, is the architect to the building, which will be of fire-proof construction. The style is Domestic Tudor; and the cost, including fittings and enclosure of site, about 2,500*l.* The contract has been taken by Messrs. Winsland and Holland. As yet the subscriptions fall far short of the sum required.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES AT BURON CASTLE.**—Sir J. P. Boileau has not been idle since he purchased, and thereby saved, this famous old Roman fortification. To the liberality of the worthy baronet the antiquarian world is indebted for some interesting discoveries recently made in the course of excavations for some time carried on under the superintendence of Mr. H. Harrod, the secretary of the Norfolk Archaeological Society. The question as to whether the western side of the camp, which overhangs the banks of the river Waveney, was ever enclosed is now set at rest, the foundations of a wall having been ascertained to exist. One of the gates has also been more perfectly developed, and an apartment 17 feet square found upon the inner side of the south wall.

**RATING IN REGENT-STREET.**—Several of the residents in Regent-street have affirmed themselves to be summoned to the Court in Marlborough-street, in order to ascertain the grounds on which the recent rating had been based, the Woods and Forests having made a great advance on the previous amount. Complaint is also made of inequality, and a case will be taken to the Quarter Sessions.

**ST. STEPHEN'S, WALBROOK.**—With reference to our notice last week of the intended works here, the architect informs us that the window about to be opened is the east window which was bricked up in 1796, and not one in the transept. For the screen at the west entrance, he has the original drawing.

**THE NEW HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT** presents a melancholy appearance. It is grieved to the bare walls and iron floor-joists. Some correspondents are very angry with us for not abusing Mr. Barry for the failure: we desire, however, to know something more of the right and wrong of the case.

**METROPOLITAN SEWERS COMMISSION.**—A monthly general meeting was with some difficulty, and after considerable delay, got up last week, at which, after various works were ordered, it was stated that with a view to provide adequate drainage for the International Exhibition Building, the commissioners had requested permission of Mr. Alger, a builder, to drain it into his sewer, lying between the Knightsbridge Barracks and Kensington. Mr. Alger had accorded permission gratis for one year, but thought he should be remunerated for a continuance of the drainage for a further period. The court accepted the offer, which was passed in the usual form. It was then ordered that the reduced sheets of the Ordnance map, on a scale of 12 inches to a mile, be sold to the public at 2*d.* a sheet, the map comprising forty-four sheets in all. A suggestion has been made to the Court to convert the Thames Tunnel into a connecting sewer!

**THE MARBLE ARCH AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE.**—Workmen have been for several days engaged in taking down the marble arch. They get on but slowly, care being taken, seemingly, to remove the structure without injury. A square enclosure near the palace has been formed for their deposit in the meantime.

**BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE** has given a further intimation of its sinking state. One arch is fairly cracked in the crown and visibly flattened, while another has exhibited symptoms of also giving way. Men have been engaged with a diving-bell in examining the foundations. They run an imminent risk of their lives on one occasion from collision of the barge with another while the bell was below water.

**IRON TRADE.**—The masters are still diminishing their make, without the slightest prospect of improvement in their sales, much less their prices. The Scottish pig-iron trade, which it was attempted to show up as something like an exception to the general dolence, has been found to be in every unsound state, bolstered up by a sort of verbiage for the nonce.